



Worshiping with Children

Praying

Helping a child grow into praying with the worshiping congregation requires more than repeated shushing and instructions to “close your eyes and be quiet!” Parents do well to become prayer partners with their children. Compiled here are several strategies for parents to use in the pews with their children. They may even enrich the faith formation of parents!

- ◆ Prayers don't require words! Invite your children to *draw* prayers. They might draw a friend they love, a classmate they're struggling to get along with, a problem they're dreading, or something that makes them happy. Invite them to draw in the margins of the bulletin or in a spiral bound “worship journal” you bring to worship each week.
- ◆ Help your child draw his/her prayers starting with a loopy design. In each section the child draws or writes one person or topic about which to pray. With markers/crayons they decorate each section as they pray about that person/topic.
- ◆ Help children follow printed prayers and scripture passages in the bulletin just as you help them follow the words in the hymnal. A bookmark and the edge of a piece of paper under the words helps.
- ◆ Identify the prayers and creeds that are used regularly in worship (like the Lord's Prayer). Learn them a phrase at a time at home, then encourage children to pray them with you in the sanctuary.
- ◆ Listen with your child to the Prayers of the People, writing down important words or phrases as you hear them on a sheet of paper or in a worship journal. Enjoy passing the pencil back and forth as you listen and write. Make special note of those being prayed for with whom the child is familiar.
- ◆ Underline a phrase in a printed prayer and write “Amen!” (“I agree” or “so be it”) beside it. Or, write your own prayer that builds on the underlined prayer, perhaps tying it to a specific concern in your family. Share it with your child.
- ◆ Write a word or phrase in one of the day's prayers or scripture passages on a sheet of paper or a page in the child's “worship journal.” Encourage the child to illustrate it or add more related prayers around it. Add drawings or prayers of your own to the page – if it feels right. Shared prayers can be quite meaningful.
- ◆ Older children like to structure prayer by writing simple poems. The first line is a person/topic. The second is two words that describe that person or topic. The third is three “-ing” words for that person or topic. The last line either repeats the word or name or a word that describes how that person/topic makes him/her feel.

Adapted using ideas from the *Worshiping with Children* blog:
www.worshipingwithchildren.blogspot.com

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